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# *Is Cheap Sugar the Triumph of Free Trade ?*

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BY A. J. J.

## SECOND LETTER

TO THE

RT. HON. LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

&c. &c. &c.

BY JACOB OMNIUM.

*Higgins & Att. J.*

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“ — A species of diplomacy which was the only specimen of the kind in English history ; the only case in which an English minister negotiated in the spirit of a pettifogging attorney, refusing to fulfil the obligations of a solemn contract on pleas really so shallow and fallacious, that in private life they would not have a very high opinion of a gentleman who endeavoured by such pleas to avoid engagements between man and man.”

*Earl Grey in answer to Lord Aberdeen. Hansard, Feb. 22, 1848.*

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LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1848.

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A SECOND LETTER,

&c. &c.

My LORD,

It is now nearly six months since I had the honour of addressing to your Lordship a letter, pointing out the disastrous results which must accrue to our sugar colonies, from the admission into this country of slave grown produce on equal terms with British plantation free grown sugar.

I had then recently returned from a visit to the West Indies, and I described to your Lordship as faithfully as I could, the actual state of affairs, both in our own colonies and in Cuba.

I took the liberty of telling you that I believed you were unconscious of the extent of the ruin which your measures, if persisted in, would inevitably inflict upon the British planters, that what you probably meant but as a reasonable stimulus to the wasteful and sluggish, would utterly destroy the thrifty and enterprising; that competition with the foreign slave driver, under the circumstances in which you had placed your own colo-

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nists, was simply impossible ; that if you meant to relieve them, you must do so speedily, or relief would come too late,\* and that procrastination would only render the task of ultimate assistance more difficult and costly.

I then detailed to you the prosperity which your Sugar Bill of 1846 had brought to the Cuban slave owner, the increase of misery it had entailed on his negroes, hurried, without regard to infirmity, sex, or age, from the lighter work of the cafetal, and hired out, like cattle, to the deadly toil of the Ingenio ; and I pointed out to you the certainty of a resumption, at no distant day, of the slave trade by Cuba, and of its actual known increase in Brazil.

My statements, which at the time met with the usual fate of statements made by an interested party, and were considered, to say the least, highly coloured, have since been confirmed, on every point, by the most impartial and unimpeachable testimony.

Governor Light of Guiana, Governor Higginson of Antigua, Lord Harris of Trinidad, and Sir C. Grey of Jamaica, have all concurred as to the

\* The self-same week that I wrote my first letter to Lord John Russell, a despatch arrived from Lord Harris, expressing his opinion as to the inevitable fate which awaited the richest colony in the West Indies, if the present ministerial course was continued, in almost the self-same words I had myself used. *Since the publication of that letter eighteen West Indian firms have been declared insolvent.—See Appendix, p. 27.*



results, predicted as inevitable by Governor Reid of Barbadoes\* (a gentleman promoted to that command from Bermuda, by Lord Grey himself), who, after a tour through the neighbouring islands of Grenada and St. Lucia, wrote to his Lordship as follows, on the 28th of February, 1848, in answer to certain queries propounded to him by the Colonial Office :†—

“My opinion is, that sugar cultivation by free labour cannot yet withstand competition on equal terms with slave labour, and that freedom should be nursed by protection for a considerable time to come. How long that time should be, you will understand I cannot say.

“If there be no protection, the cultivation of sugar will dwindle in all the windward islands excepting Barbadoes.

“Whilst travelling in these islands, and amongst estates falling off in production, I felt a conviction, that without protection the most serious loss for humanity would not be loss of sugar, but that the consummation of the greatest act of human legislation, the abolition of slavery, will be retarded, and perhaps endangered.”‡

\* Compare the value of this mass of evidence with that relied upon in preference by Lord Grey in his Speech of February 7th. —See *Appendix*, p. 25 to 30.

† 7th Report. Committee on Sugar Planting, p. 282.

‡ Sir C. Grey has since declared, in reply to a deputation from the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, on the 15th of April, 1848, that “*the present distress which has fallen upon the West Indies, arises in a great measure from the withdrawal of capital from our colonies, and its investment in more lucrative employment in the foreign colonies, where slavery exists in full force and unmitigated atrocity.*”

On the other hand, Lord Palmerston,\* Mr. Banelin,† and Captain Birch, R.N.‡ (the latter of whom has recently returned from a command in the slave squadron), bore witness to the enormously increased activity of the slave trade, subsequent to the passing of the Bill of 1846.

Our Consul General, and our Slave Commissioners in Cuba and Jamaica,§ wrote, first, that upwards of 100,000 slaves—old people, women, and children—had been removed from the culture of coffee to that of the cane ; and, secondly, that vessels had been despatched from the Havaña, and from Spain, to seek fresh supplies of new negroes on the coast of Africa.

They further stated, that the culture of sugar in that colony had become incredibly remunerative, and that the slaves on the ingenios were habitually worked during crop time eighteen hours out of the twenty-four.

Their accounts were corroborated by Captain Matson, R.N.,|| who, having been for the last two years cruising off the coast of Cuba, declared that when the news of your measures reached the Havaña, the prices of slaves and of sugar instantly rose from fifteen to twenty per cent., and that

\* 1st Report. C. S. P. p. 5.

† 1st Report. Slave Trade Committee. Ques. 3230 to 3459.

‡ 1st Report. S. T. C. Ques. 2229 to 2241.

§ 7th Report. C. S. P. p. 364 to 373.

|| 1st Report. S. T. C. Ques. 1491 to 7—1691 to 3.

slavers were at once prepared to resume the slave trade.\*

I believe, my Lord, I could adduce no more disinterested or worthier evidence to prove that the information I tendered you, in my letter of October last, was in every respect accurate, and that the inferences I drew from it have since been fully borne out by even more distressing results than I at that time anticipated.†

\* “The rumours which reach us of the revival of the slave trade practices in these seas, are of too vague a nature to enable us to report on them so specifically as we could wish; but they are nevertheless sufficiently definite to have induced Commodore Lambert to detach two ships of the squadron under his orders from the routine duties of the station, *for the first time since the establishment of the Court of which we are members*, for the special purpose of cruising against the slave trade.

“Jamaica, Jan. 1, 1848. (Signed) D. TURNBULL,  
A. B. HAMILTON,  
“*H. M. Slave Commissioners.*”

1st Report. S. T. C. Appendix.

“H.M.S. Alarm and Daring, and steamer Vixen, were to sail from Kingston, Jamaica, on the 7th April, 1848, with orders to cruise off the ports of Cuba and Porto Rico, for the interception of slaves. It was said, information had been received of ten slavers having some time since left Havana for the coast of Africa, and it was considered probable some of them might be fallen in with.”—*Times*, May 6, 1848.

† The following Circular, sent round by Messrs. Burnley, Eccles, and Co—to the entire truth of which every merchant acquainted with their affairs, and every creditor of the firm will bear testimony—stands out in sad contrast to the prosperity of the Cuban and Brazilian speculators in slaves. In this case, absenteeism and high mercantile charges cannot be alleged as

I believe, moreover, that I am speaking within bounds when I say that almost every prediction

having conduced to their ruin, for Messrs. Burnley's estates were superintended by relatives in the Colonies, and they discharged the duties of merchants themselves on this side of the Atlantic:—

“Glasgow, 3rd May, 1848.

“SIR,—It is with deep regret we inform you that we are under the necessity of suspending payments. A sequestration has been sent for with our concurrence; and in a few days you will be requested to attend a meeting of our creditors. For upwards of half a century we have steadily followed our business of West India merchants, never engaging in speculations of any kind. Our assets chiefly consist of sugar estates in Trinidad and Demerara. These estates are in excellent condition, capable of making large crops; but they have been rendered worse than unprofitable, and of no value, by Acts of Parliament—the worst of which being the Sugar Duty Act of 1846—whereby slave-made sugar was admitted to consumption in this country on terms which the British Colonies are altogether unprepared to compete with.—We are, Sir,

“Your most obedient servants,

“ECCLES, BURNLEY, AND CO.

“WM. AND JAS. ECCLES AND CO.

“Rio de Janeiro, Feb. 9th, 1848.

“MY LORD,—I have the honour to inform your Lordship, that, according to the best estimation I have been able to make, 60,000 Africans have been imported as slaves into Brazil during the year 1847.

“There is no doubt that this frightful number has been greatly occasioned by the concentration of the English naval force in the waters of the Plate; at the same time I learn that never have the slave dealers so perfected all the appurtenances and appliances of their vile trade as at present; never have they organized the whole range of shore signals from St. Katherine's to Bahia, nor established such facilities for landing their cargoes as

made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Grey in February last has been already disap-

now, and I am afraid I may now add with perfect truth, that never was the toleration, not to say co-operation of this Government, more open than at the present moment.

"It is a well-known fact, that a vessel belonging to this port made five voyages to the coast during the last year, and landed in safety all her cargoes ; at a moderate computation this single ship must have brought from 2000 to 3000 slaves.

"I have, &c.

(Signed) "HOWDEN.

"To Viscount Palmerston, &c."

MR. ACTING CONSUL WESTWOOD TO LORD PALMERSTON.

"Rio de Janeiro, Dec. 20th, 1847.

"In conformity to instructions from Her Majesty's Minister at this Court, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that there are now two steam vessels regularly employed in the slave trade between this port and the African coast, namely, the 'Providencia,' and the 'Theresa,' both under the Brazilian flag."

MR. CONSUL PORTER TO THE SAME.

"Bahia, Dec. 31st, 1847.

"It appears from the slave returns which I have had the honour to transmit to your Lordship that 3,500 slaves have been landed in the vicinity of this city during the quarter ending this day, being the largest importation that has taken place during a like period for the last eight years. \* \* \*

It appears that the slave trade is increasing in a great degree, which may be accounted for by the great temptation now held out to individuals to embark in this traffic, as small shares can be obtained in the companies established here for that purpose.

"The American brig 'George,' which sailed hence for Africa, on the 29th of August last, returned hither on the 16th inst., under Brazilian colours, landing a cargo of 726 slaves in a miser-

pointed, and that the foundations on which they condescended to base their arguments and assertions have been shewn to be of the sandiest and most unworthy description.

I think you will not be able to avoid admitting, when the subject next comes before Parliament, although you have hitherto shrunk from doing so, that the question really at issue is, whether the cultivation of the sugar-cane shall pass from the hands of the free-labour farmers of the British Colonies into those of the slave-drivers of Cuba and Brazil—whether the vast capital which you have so strenuously urged our commercial adventurers to invest in our colonies since 1833, shall be utterly annihilated; and whether England shall in future depend for her saccharine supplies on the labour of the free man or the slave.

able state of starvation, 111 poor creatures having perished on the passage from deficiency of water and provisions.”—1st Report, S. T. A. Appendix.

“Falmouth, May 9th, 1848.

“H.M. Packet Swift, Lieut. Lory, R.N., arrived this morning about ten o’clock, with mails from the Brazils.

“The Firebrand steamer, was expected at Rio within a week. By her, Lord Howden returns to this country, *having failed in effecting a treaty with Brazil*. The slave trade is carried on to an enormous extent, about 5000 slaves having been landed in Bahia in two months, from thirteen vessels, and about 7000 more in the neighbourhood of Campos, Rio Grande, and Rio Janeiro. There are several steamers employed in that inhuman and demoralizing traffic.”—*Times*, May 23, 1848.

There can be no doubt but that you are now alive to the cruel errors of which you have been guilty, and that you would not be unwilling to assist us in any way which would not infringe upon the integrity of the Sugar Bill of 1846, and declare the ignorant rashness of your legislation with regard to the Sugar Colonies since your assumption of office.

If your measures had been passed deliberately, after due information had been collected respecting the social condition of our various sugar growing colonies,\*—after a system of prompt and regular immigration had been matured, and full preparation made for immediately conceding to the colonies the advantages as well as the disadvantages of Free-trade—it would have been easier to account for the morbid affection with which you so obstinately cling to that premature and abortive measure.

But, subsequent events have shewn that none of these precautions had been taken.

When you decided that the country should pay a diminished price for our produce, you proposed, by repealing the Navigation Laws,† by equalizing the

\* Two years afterwards, Sir C. Wood declared that labour in Jamaica was to be obtained at a much less cost than during slavery; and Lord Grey refuted statements respecting the high wages required by the labourers in that island in 1848, by shewing, “from an official authority,” that a year before, wages had been low in Tobago, which is exactly as distant and as differently circumstanced from Jamaica, as Corsica is from the Isle of Dogs.

† The late Vice-President of the Board of Trade informed a witness before Lord George Bentinck’s Committee, that the ope-

spirit duties,\* and above all, by giving us an immediate command of labour, to enable us, nevertheless, to realize a fair and reasonable profit from our estates.

The assurances which you at the same time held out to English capitalists, that our West Indian colonies still offered a most favourable field for investment, and the indignant manner in which you disclaimed the possibility of a revival of the slave trade being caused by any act of yours, clearly prove that you did not anticipate the disastrous results which have since ensued from your hasty legislation.

Your bill passed. The price of British colonial sugar fell one-half, that of slave grown produce fully maintained the standard at which it had ranged prior to 1846.

It then transpired that no arrangements whatever had been matured by the Colonial Office for obtaining immigration from Africa—no conclusive information had been collected as to the points from whence it was to be procured; it was then, and is, I believe, still, a moot point, whether the Kroo Coast or Cape Castle, could supply us with many or with any labourers.

ration of the Navigation Laws mulcted our West Indian colonies in the annual sum of £500,000. If Mr. Milner Gibson's statistics are to be relied upon, it was surely unjust to expose us to this tax, in addition to the high duties already levied on our produce for two years, before any attempt was made to revise those Laws; but I beg to add, that I hold myself in no way responsible for the accuracy of the above calculation of that able Whig Minister.

\* The duties on British and colonial spirits remain still unequalled.



The Navigation Laws remained intact, the spirit duties unequalized, *whilst the slave trade instantly doubled in amount*. Not even a quarter of the slaves captured by our cruisers since 1846 have been conveyed to the West Indian colonies.\* And when, after the lapse of nearly a year and a half, Lord Grey had at length collected materials for his famous immigration manifesto of November 2, that statesman-like but tardy conception fell to the ground still-born.

Not only the colonists of Guiana and Trinidad and Jamaica had been ruined in the interval, and the mercantile houses connected with them in this country driven into the Gazette, by the fatal delay which had occurred, but no other adventurers appeared anxious to take their places, in spite of the tempting solicitations of Lord Grey, and the

\* According to Sir C. Wood, 40,000 free immigrants have been imported into Guiana, and 20,000 into Trinidad during the last fifteen years, entirely at the expense of the colonists.

According to Lord Palmerston, 64,000 slaves were imported into Brazil during 1846, and a like number in 1847, whilst from 1840 to 1845 the number annually exported from Africa had averaged but 32,600.

The moment a slave lands in Brazil his energies are concentrated in the cultivation and manufacture of sugar, until death releases him. The immigrants into Guiana and Trinidad work where, when, and as little as they please, their labour has thus been of little value, and they have in many cases found the meddling humanity of the Colonial Office as fatal to them as the lash of the Mayoral has proved to the negro.—*See Lord Harris's despatch to Lord Grey, 7th Report, S. C. P. p. 274.*

“firm convictions” of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; the public credit of the colonies was destroyed, and the despatch which had been composed for their regeneration, proved in consequence mere waste paper.

A steady inset of labour, commencing with the alteration of the duties in 1846, might have enabled them to meet the subsequent fall of price by a reduction of wages, and by the increased production consequent on more careful agriculture and manufacture—for the want of it—the planters have been involved in an unequal contest with their labourers, in which many of them have succumbed. Their costly machinery is decaying in idleness, their drainage is choked, and their valuable cultivation fast lapsing into bush.

Lord Grey, however, unmoved by the ruin of hundreds of deserving and industrious men, which need never have occurred had the Colonial Office done its duty, appears to be resolved, that the wages of the labouring population shall be reduced, no matter at what cost to the planters. If he has not had the time or the information necessary to ensure them immigration, he can as certainly attain his object by exposing them to ruinously low prices. For it is very clear that by thus consummating the bankruptcy of all connected with the colonies, the negroes will not only not obtain the high wages they have hitherto received, but they will obtain none at all.

This, however, is but clumsy and cruel states-

manship—on a par with the practice of a surgeon, who, to save trouble, radically cures head-ache by decapitation.

Lord Grey cannot, in the next debate, again attribute our position to our own laches and unskilfulness. His own agents have declared that the general conduct of the Cuban estates is inferior to ours,\* and that the planters of that island are but now adopting improvements which have been in general use in our colonies for the last 25 years, whilst his Lordship has since admitted that “*there is no colony in which greater or more enlightened endeavours have been made for the improvement of agriculture and manufacture than in British Guiana.*”†—Governor Light too, whilst pointing out the improvements of which the sugar cultivation is still susceptible, frankly states, that the colonists are so reduced as to be unable to make any further progress, “without assistance from some quarter or other.”

Lord Grey cannot, as he has hitherto done, expatiate on the evils of absenteeism, and on the inevitable prosperity of residents, for it now transpires that the very body of gentlemen to whom he alluded in his speech on the 7th of February last, as affording a practical proof of the advantages which awaited men of science and capital residing on their plantations, had actually placed in his Lordship’s hands

\* Consul-General Crawford’s despatch, 7th Report, S. C. P. p. 368. Mr. Overmann’s statement, p. 373.

† 3rd Report, S. C. P. p. 348.

*before he made that speech*, most convincing and affecting details of the desperate nature of the position, in which the hastiness and ill-faith of the British nation had placed them.\*

I trust he will not permit the time of the House to be wasted, whilst gentlemen from Downing Street lecture the West Indian body on their inefficient machinery and imperfect cultivation. Let him be assured that they are as anxious to grow heavy crops, and to extract every particle of saccharine matter from the cane, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer or Mr. Hawes can be to shew them how to do it, and that they know how to conduct the business to which they have been brought up, and in which their fortunes are involved, better even than those ingenious statesmen, if they conceived they had a fair chance of doing so profitably.

It is not difficult, seated in a cool room in Downing Street, supplied with the best pamphlets on the subject, unvexed by mosquitos, dry seasons, yellow fever, or Exeter Hall, abundantly furnished with ideal capital, obtaining at will a continuous supply of honest labour, to drain your cane-fields thoroughly, plough and cross plough them, until their soil is absolutely pulverised, to cut and grind at the most favourable moment, and manufacturing your sugar by De Rosne and Cail's improved apparatus, to obtain a much heavier imaginary yield per acre of better and cheaper sugar than was ever

\* See Appendix, p. 33.

produced by the most skilful and inhuman slave driver.

And if we could carry on our farming operations in the colonies as easily as Mr. Hawes directs the conduct of his tropical model farm upon paper, we at once should set our shoulders to the wheel with all our heart and all our soul.

But at this moment many of our best canes in Guiana are still uncut in consequence of the strike (they were ripe in December 1847, and have been deteriorating ever since); our cultivation is choked with weeds, and its yield, if we take it off, will be proportionably diminished: yet when they learn at the Colonial Office that we have made but three-quarters of a ton per acre, the very clerks will exclaim contemptuously, "Why the Cubans make nearly double that quantity, and Planter Hawes, by his last calculations, got two tons and a half from ratoons on our very worst soil upstairs."

Lord Grey can no longer reproach the British West Indians with the inferiority of their produce to that of the foreign slave colonies, after the lucid explanation supplied to him by Lord Harris on that score. His Lordship points out that the quality of sugar depends on care in manufacture, which cannot be obtained from the free labourer in our colonies under present circumstances; and that the quantity raised per acre depends equally on high and attentive cultivation, which the scarcity and irregularity of our labour renders unattain-

able.\* Nor must it be forgotten that in drawing a comparison between the merits of free and slave labour, the intelligent free labour of civilized and densely populated countries is improperly contrasted with the unwilling toil of the debased slave, whilst at present the free labour of the West Indies is necessarily of a very inferior caste to that of Europe. The monopoly so long conceded to the Creole negroes, and the absence of all competition in the labour market since emancipation, has confirmed them in habits of careless indolence,† and the majority of the immigrants from Africa and India are, on their arrival, incapable of appreciating the advantages to be derived from regular and honest industry.‡

Unless the opinions and statements sent home by your colonial Governors be, as Lord Grey appears to consider them, totally unworthy of attention and credit; unless the report of the Committee which has just concluded its labours deserves equal

\* 7th Report, S.C.P. p. 272.

† Lord Harris describes the daily task of a negro in Trinidad to be between 4 and 5 hours. He adds, the same man rarely performs two tasks in the same day. The pay lists of the estates shew that on an average each negro works about 10 days out of 30.

Therefore, during crop time, a negro in Guiana or Trinidad works 45 hours per month.

Mr. Crawford, Consul-General in Cuba, declares that in crop time the negroes there work 18 hours out of the 24—432 hours per month. These are not the exaggerations of interested parties, but the answers of official men to the inquiries of Government.

‡ The Kroomen form an exception to the general class of immigrants, and are remarkable for their thrifty and energetic habits.

contempt, there can be no doubt that if your present policy be continued, the supply of sugar from our West Indian colonies and from British India will rapidly disappear, and that from the Mauritius will diminish.

Java, Manilla, Siam and China sent home but 105,000 tons of sugar last year. The best and most recent authorities declare that the cultivation of Java admits of no increase;\* and the supplies from the other sugar-consuming countries of the East were attracted to this country by the high prices which had ruled the year before, and not in consequence of any increased cultivation. The baffled speculators who imported them are not likely to import any more to compete on even terms with the produce of slave-importing countries.

The statistics of beet-root sugar which I have collected from the most authentic sources, and which you will find in the Appendix, will shew you that Mr. Wilson's discoveries on that point, were, as I predicted at the time, more effective during the last debate than they are likely to be again. I sincerely hope that that gentleman will not, in his zeal for his new employers, embarrass us in the next debate by any "maple sugar" notions from the United States. Boldly put forward by such an authority as the *Economist*, we could not upset them under at least two months.

It therefore follows, my Lord, that we must, as I have before said, look for our future supplies to

\* Jukes' *Voyage of the Fly*. 1847. p. 193.

Cuba and Brazil, and if you are prepared to declare openly your abandonment of the policy which England has pursued during the last forty years at such a reckless expenditure of life and treasure, and in which you yourself have borne no undistinguished share—if casting aside humanity, honour, and justice, your only object be to obtain cheap slave grown sugar, I have not a word more to say on the subject—except that if you had brought forward your Bill of 1846 in 1833—the losses caused by emancipation to the Planters of the West Indies—and the cost of compensation to the people of this country would have been spared, and the cause of humanity would be in a far better position than it now is.

If you are determined to admit slave grown produce into this country, with the information you now possess, it will be dishonest to urge private enterprize to invest further capital in our own colonies—it will be a sheer waste of public money to advance loans to the various communities on the security of the estates. So long as they are not on a par with their opponents as to labour, they *cannot* make sugar so cheaply as Cuba or Brazil. There are no improvements in manufacture or agriculture which we can make, that slave countries are not equally disposed and better able to adopt, for they have reaped rich harvests during our last two years of ruin.\*

And now, my Lord, I will in conclusion advert to a point which I touch upon with extreme reluct-

\* See Appendix, p. 64.



ance, because I know how unequal is the contest of character between an obscure West Indian planter and statesmen high in office.

I am aware of all the lofty sentiments which may be successfully paraded in Parliament in defence of very shuffling work, and of the obloquy which may and probably will be cast on me by your supporters for daring to point out what appears to me unpardonable dishonesty.\*

But on this question depends not only a great portion of my own fortune, but also the fortunes of many of my relations and friends, of men far more deserving than myself, who, to my knowledge, have been working earnestly and manfully for years in unhealthy climates to ensure a provision for their families; who having invested their capital on "*the security of the national faith of Great Britain and Ireland, pledged in the most solemn form in which such an engagement was ever made,*"† have been one day baffled in their honest aim, because the "no slavery" and the "am I not your brother" cry suited your Lordship's political friends, and who are now consigned by you to hopeless beggary, because "cheap slave grown sugar" is a more popular slogan amongst the politicians of the Manchester school.

I allude, my Lord, to the unfair manner in which the late Sugar Debates were conducted, to the unfounded assertions which were made by men, who,

\* I beg leave to state that I use the word dishonesty in precisely the same sense as Lord Grey used the word "pettifogging"—a Parliamentary one.

† See Appendix, p. 52.

if they knew no better, had at least no excuse for their ignorance, to the unworthy evidence on which the Ministers based their case, to the unimpeachable evidence which they suppressed.

It is possible that your view of this question may be the correct one, and that I may be entirely mistaken, *I do not think I am*, but it is not possible that the line of conduct adopted in the last debate by the Ministers of the Crown can be justified by any recognized rule of right and wrong.

The Noble Secretary for the Colonies, after declaring in the commencement of his speech, that he meant to deal with the question before the House “with the utmost candour,” produced a despatch from a gentleman whom he had appointed to the government of one of the most densely populated of our colonial possessions. He pronounced that despatch to be a most able and admirable document, and said that, “every line of it deserved the attention of Parliament.”

He then read from it such sentences as established the case he was attempting to make, but entirely omitted to state that its writer’s conclusions, formed on the spot, were entirely different from his Lordship’s, and that they pronounced free labour, even in populous Antigua, to be unable, for obvious reasons, to compete with the forced and unrequited toil of the slave.

No other person at that time had access to that despatch. I ask you, my Lord, (and if you will cast your eyes over the title page of this pamphlet, you

will admit that I have a right to test Lord Grey by the guage with which he measures others,) what would be thought of a gentleman who acted thus in private life? I know full well that my credit in the City would be sadly shaken if I were shewn to be thus capable of mutilating the sentiments of other men to establish my own views, and so making them appear to share opinions from which I knew they entirely dissented.

I have too high an opinion of Lord Grey's integrity to think that he has wittingly been guilty of the acts of which I complain. I am rather inclined to believe, that his Lordship is afflicted with a sort of moral strabismus, which involuntarily but invariably averts the vision of his mind's eye from all evidence, no matter how worthy, which contradicts his own pre-formed opinions, whilst its morbid retina eagerly grasps and magnifies the importance of the trashiest testimony which may chance to corroborate his views. It is this deplorable infirmity which renders his Lordship's acknowledged talents comparatively valueless to the country, and has hitherto made him a dangerous patron and an impracticable ally.

Surely it is not too much to insist, before an important question, involving the best interests of humanity, the ruin of thousands, and the annihilation of many millions of property, be finally decided upon by the legislature of this country, that every source from which information on the subject

can be derived, should be fairly and freely laid open to all concerned on either side—that no official evasions, no withholding or garbling of documents should be permitted—and that before a Cabinet Minister gives to evidence that weight which it must inevitably acquire by the fact of its being brought forward, and dwelt upon by a high officer of the Crown, he should take reasonable precautions to ascertain that it is trustworthy and true.\*

I have particularized the evidence, which is entirely official, on which I have founded the assertions made by me in this letter, and have given the dates and numbers of the despatches from which I have quoted, that your Lordship may readily ascertain if you please, that I have been guilty of no unfairness. If you persist in adhering to your present course, every succeeding packet will demonstrate to you the accuracy of the views I have hitherto expressed, as fully as the last six months have placed the truth of the information I gave you in October last, beyond either doubt or contradiction.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

JACOB OMNIUM.

\* The pernicious praise of Lord Grey has elicited a second “able pamphlet” from Dr. Jelly, who now discovers that nothing but protection can save, not only the sugar colonies of Great Britain, but the mother country herself. Perhaps Lord Grey will inform us whether Mr. Price’s free-trade views have also been modified by his second visit to Jamaica.

## APPENDIX.

“The public may fairly ask why Sir C. Wood did not inform the House of the nature of the accounts given by Lord Harris of the actual condition of Trinidad—of the tenor of Sir C. Grey’s despatches from Jamaica—of Mr. Light’s views concerning the probability of the continuation of the sugar cultivation of Guiana.

“The Government were well supplied with such information. Two packets had arrived during the previous week, and it is, to say the least, a suspicious circumstance that, without alluding in the most remote degree to the opinions of those able and zealous servants of the crown—they preferred establishing their case and defending the bill of 1846, on the testimony of trashy pamphlets written by men of proved incapacity and avowed inexperience.”—*J. Omnium’s Letter to the Times, Feb. 7, 1848.*

BEFORE the Christmas holidays Mr. Hume moved for the publication of the despatches of Lord Harris, Governor of Trinidad, to Earl Grey. They were not however laid on the table of the House of Commons *until the 4th of February, five minutes after the debate on Lord George Bentinck’s motion for a committee had been concluded.* Consequently, although the Ministers well knew what they contained, they preserved a strict silence as to their contents, and the supporters of the West Indian interest had no means of referring to them.\*

\* The Under Secretary for the Colonies, when questioned before Lord G. Bentinck’s Committee as to the reason why these important documents had been withheld, answered thus:—

Ques. 16572.—“All that I have to say upon the subject is this; that the despatches which were moved for were prepared for Parliament, and ready to be laid on the table; but just before the meeting of Parliament fresh despatches of very great importance came, and a great effort was made to print them in time to deliver them with the others; but a delay arose over which we had no control at all, and that was the only cause of their being delivered the day but one after the meeting of Parliament.”

The fact of despatches, which had not been moved for, not

In a despatch to Earl Grey, dated 28th December, 1846, Lord Harris, after expressing his conviction that Coolie immigration was too costly to be any longer desirable, adds :—

“ It has undoubtedly had a most valuable moral effect on the Creole labourer, and has shewn him that he cannot do quite as he likes. I must say, when I consider the competition the estates are now exposed to, the encumbrances with which they are already burthened, and the expenses of cultivation,—*and these are such, that I possess a detailed account of the produce and expenses of the same estate before and since emancipation ; previously sugar was made for 55 cents (2s 3d) the 100 lbs. ; it now costs 5 dollars, (or £1. 0s 10d),*—that I think it is time to pause, to look matters thoroughly in the face, and to have the

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being ready, scarcely seems even a fair Whig reason for the non-delivery of other despatches, which *had* been moved for, and *were* ready ; but on referring to the Parliamentary Papers in question, No. 62 of the present session, it appears that when delivered they contained no despatch which is not noted as having been received by the Colonial Office *more than a month before Parliament met* ; and therefore the “ despatches of great importance, which came just before the meeting of Parliament,” alluded to above, are certainly not included therein.

Yet we further find that Mr. Herman Merivale, a month afterwards, on the 8th of March, in furnishing Lord George Bentinck’s Committee with copies *of all the despatches* of any importance received from the Governors of her Majesty’s colonies in the West Indies or the Mauritius, refers the Committee to Parliamentary Papers No. 62 of the present session, for *all the despatches* which had been received up to that date from Trinidad, “ which related to the present state or cultivation of sugar or coffee in those possessions, or contained representations of the distressed state of the Planters.” What then can have become of the important despatches to which Mr. Hawes attributes the delay ?

affair rigorously investigated before larger debt is incurred. In the mean time, it is to be hoped that the coast of Africa will be opened so as to supply the gap which the return of the Coolies to their own country will make in the numbers of the labouring population."

On the 4th September, 1847, his Lordship further writes :—

"I would venture to hope that you will take into consideration the propriety of rendering further assistance to these colonies for immigration purposes. The introduction of from 500 to 1000 immigrants in each year can have no perceptible effect upon the price of labour; and unless that is reduced, and quickly, *I do not see how the cultivation of the cane can be carried on with any prospect of success.* I can assure your Lordship, that I have it *from the best authority*, that even *under the most favourable circumstances*, the price of sugar will not repay the cost of production; and that the distress which in consequence at present exists in this colony has never been equalled."

And, on the 18th September he repeats his appeals to the Home Government in the following energetic tone, at the same time enclosing a petition from the colonists :—

"I have already mentioned to your Lordship the distress existing at this time in the colony, and which is increasing daily, and amounts to an unprecedented stagnation of business; the cases of which, constantly brought to my notice, *viz* estates having the finest promise of a larger crop than was ever previously produced being almost abandoned from the want of means to pay for the necessary labour, are most distressing. \* \* \* *Without entering into any of the details mentioned in the petition, either concerning anticipated concessions, or as applicable to future remedies, I do not hesitate to express to your Lordship my conviction, that if this colony is not to be left to subside into*

*a state of comparative barbarism—which would result from the ruin of its larger proprietors—some more than ordinary relief is necessary to support it in the contest in which it, in common with the other British West India colonies, is now engaged.*

*“Circumstanced as it is, I believe it incapable of successfully competing in the British market with the produce of countries in which slavery is still permitted, unless the advantages of free trade are conceded to it as well as the disadvantages: and I would add, that relief should come speedily, if it is to produce any effect.”*

It was not convenient for Earl Grey or the Chancellor of the Exchequer to quote the opinions of unquestionably the most independent and able public servant in our sugar colonies, and it was still less convenient that they should be accessible to their opponents; therefore they were suppressed, and the testimony of Mr. Scotland, a shopkeeper in Jamaica, and of Dr. Jelly, a medical practitioner, two persons utterly unknown even to West Indians, and neither of them practical planters, were alone adduced in support of Lord Grey's favourite fallacy, that under all circumstances “free labour is cheaper than slave labour.” When taunted with the fact that he had carefully abstained from citing the opinions of the Governors of the various colonies on that point, Lord Grey did hunt out an assertion made nearly a year before by Major Græme, the Governor of one of the most insignificant of our tropical possessions, Tobago, an island producing 2,300 hogsheads of sugar with 13,000 inhabitants; who wrote thus:—



“Tobago, with some disadvantages, enjoys several superiorities which Barbados and the more northerly islands do not possess. In the first place, we are on the outer boundary line of hurricanes, are seldom or ever affected by earthquakes, and the seasons are more equal and the rains more plentiful than is generally the case elsewhere; our forests, also, although (unlike those of other colonies within the tropics) abounding in singing-birds of beautiful plumage and insects of all kinds, are exempt from the monkey tribe, whose depredations are much dreaded by the planter: but what is still more singular, that destructive animal the cane-rat is almost entirely unknown.

“It is an error to suppose that in Tobago we give a high rate of wages. The price of field-labour varies from 6*d* to 1*s* per diem, according to age, for attached negroes,—that is, for such as have houses and grounds; but 1*s* 4*d* is demanded on Saturdays, which is still, I regret to observe, considered as a day of exclusive freedom, and of exemption from estates employ. It may not be here out of place to give a striking evidence of the economy, laying other considerations aside, of free over compulsory labour. The charge in slavery for preparing and opening an acre of land in this island by the employment of a task-gang was £8. sterling: the same amount of work was performed very recently for £1. 19*s* 10*d*, and upon a Saturday too, when the people, as stated above, demand the higher rate of wages.”

Major Græme appears to be as sanguine in support of his theory, as the free-traders are in support of theirs, if he is not as dishonest; for when, but a few months after writing the above, he had to communicate to Earl Grey, October 14, 1847, that the island had been “torn to pieces” by a hurricane, that “two-thirds of the houses and sugar works had been razed to the ground,” the Government House gutted, many people destroyed, and

himself and his family driven to take refuge, at the imminent risk of their lives, in the cellars, he added, “ I do not think the vortex of the whirlwind passed over us, and *I am still of opinion that Tobago is not in the direct line of hurricanes*, and I hope this visitation is an exception to the general rule.”

And after quoting the above passage from Major Græme’s silly despatch about singing birds, monkeys, cheap labour, and hurricanes, Lord Grey is reported to have said that “ those who objected to quotations from pamphlets *might see in that official authority*, clear evidence of the truth that freedom was not more costly than slavery ;” although he had at the very time much worthier and more recent official authority in his possession which testified to the contrary.

His Lordship, in reading to the House of Lords certain statements which coincided with his own views, from what he termed “ a most able and admirable despatch, every line of which deserved the attention of Parliament,” from Governor Higginson of Antigua, passed over the following rather important lines in silence : “ *It must be conceded, that for obvious reasons, free grown sugar can never yield so lucrative a return as that produced by foreign slaves.*”

Sir C. Grey, 21st Sept. 1847, p. 355, (3rd Report) writes from Jamaica to Earl Grey.

“ I think it my duty to mention that the low price to which sugar has recently fallen in the London market, without any cor-

responding reduction of duty, really threatens with ruin many of the planters who have latterly been struggling hard to keep their heads above water.

“ \* \* \* There is a sincere apprehension amongst the persons most thoroughly acquainted with the subject, that with the present London prices of West Indian sugar, and the present rate of duties, it will be impossible to carry on here, without loss and ruin, the cultivation of sugar for exportation.”

In a Speech to the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, (3rd Rept. p. 361.) Sir C. Grey, after pointing out the advantages which the reduction of the duties on sugar and rum, in 1845 and 1846, might be supposed to have conferred on the planters, said, he “freely declared his opinion that they had a strong claim to relief by a further reduction of duty, if the finances of England can sustain it.”

Sir C. Grey forwarded a copy of this Speech to Lord Grey, apologizing at the same time for “having admitted too broadly, and to an inconvenient extent, the claims of the planters to relief.” (3rd. Rept. p. 360).—Lord Grey in a despatch dated 22nd. Nov. 1847, (3rd. Rept. p. 368.) reprimands him for having indulged in, and expressed in so public and formal a manner, expressions of relief being afforded which it will not be possible to grant.

The contents of all these despatches were at that time known only to the members of the Government. *They were accessible to no one else.*

Surely Lord Grey ought, in candour, to have stated that the opinions of Sir C. Grey, of Lord Harris, of Governors Light and Higginson, all men

to whose intelligence and zeal he has himself repeatedly borne just and spontaneous testimony ; all practical men, forming their conclusions on the spot, *were entirely at variance with his own*, which were merely supported by a Jamaica doctor, by the collecting constable of Annetto Bay, an insolvent shopkeeper, and by the too sanguine Græme of Tobago, unconvinced even by the late disaster of the liability of that island to hurricanes, before, after imputing mismanagement, ignorance and want of energy to the present race of planters, he invited “men of science, energy, and capital,” to repair to our colonies, and embark in the cultivation of sugar, assuring them, that *in his opinion*, “they could not fail of perfect success.” The speculators thus invoked would then have been better able to estimate the actual value of his Lordship’s “*strong conviction that a great prosperity was still in store for those who engaged in such a course.*”\*

Would Lord Grey, in private life, have counselled a tenant’s son to emigrate to New Zealand, and engage himself there in agricultural pursuits, on the authority of passages in pamphlets, such as those of Messrs. Jelly and Scotland, suppressing the fact that at the very time he was giving such advice, he had in his possession letters from the Governor of the colony, and from every person of respectability, practically conversant with its affairs, declaring that ruin awaited all who connected themselves with it?

\* Times, Feb. 8, 1848.

Lord Grey has on more than one occasion expressed himself very strongly against absenteeism, observing that if he lived in Jamaica, he should not expect to farm his estate in Northumberland to advantage. Probably not ; but if he found he could not farm it himself, he would expect to let it for a good and well paid rent to a thriving tenant, or to sell it for 30 or 32 years purchase. Towards the conclusion of his speech, in February, he is reported to have said, in speaking of Jamaica, “to believe the business of planting could be conducted to a profit by absentees was quite a delusion, and it was evident that that truth was practically felt by some planters, who had recently invested as much as £142,000 in property purchased since the measure of emancipation passed.”\* It would have been more germane to the question before the House, if he had stated how much had been purchased since the bills of 1844 and 1846, and it would have surely been but fair to the West Indians, and to the legislative body whom he was addressing, if he had communicated to their Lordships the following memorial ; from the very gentlemen to whom he alluded, resident planters in Jamaica, forwarded to him by Sir C. Grey, and *received prior to the February sugar debates*, which would have shewn the nature of their feelings as to the investment of capital which they had made.

\* Times, Feb. 8, 1848.

MEMORIAL to the Right Honourable the Earl Grey, Her Majesty's  
Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

We pray your earnest attention to the following facts.

We, the undersigned, are the owners of 19, and the lessees of 13 sugar estates in the west end of the island of Jamaica, on which properties we employ daily an average of 2,898 labourers, who represent families numbering 14,490 people, lately redeemed from slavery. Our sugar estates, 32 in number, are expected to make this year 2,796 hogsheads of sugar and 1,354 puncheons of rum, which will cost us, by accurate computation, 60,315*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* We have no hope of realizing more than 15*l.* per hogshead and 14*l.* per puncheon (the maximum price of the market at present), at which rate our produce will bring 60,896*l.* leaving a balance over our expenditure of 580*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.* to go against six per cent., the common rate of interest which money bears in the colony, and which on 60,315*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* would be 3,618*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* Our capital invested on these 32 sugar estates in live stock and implements of husbandry, amounts in live stock to 32,094*l.*; in implements, to 14,630*l.* upon which wear-and-tear capital we receive no interest whatever. The 19 sugar estates that we own cost us 95,784*l.* and we pay a rental for the 13 other estates of 3,110*l.* per annum, which sunk capital is likewise wholly profitless.

We are not so absurd as to expect that the British nation should abandon the principles of free trade, now upheld by the majority of the people, in order to afford us protection, but we submit it cannot be consonant with the spirit of free trade to give to the slave colonies a monopoly of the sugar market by allowing them to cultivate sugar with means (slaves) denied to us; and we submit they must have that monopoly if the British West Indies cease to supply the market with sugar, as your lordship must have ascertained that a supply from the East Indies cannot be obtained at the rates of slave grown produce.

Now we are resident proprietors, and all of us, with one exception, have purchased and leased our properties since the Emancipation Act. It will be evident from the facts stated that we cannot cultivate for another year ; indeed, we have not the means, unaided, of taking off the present crop, and the British West India merchants are now unable to assist us, and of course disinclined, where there is no hope of profit or even of recovering their advances. If we, being proprietors and lessees, living on and managing our own properties, brought up to tropical agriculture, and availing ourselves of every practical improvement, have only such a result to exhibit as is set forth in the statement of these facts, the inference is conclusive that the position of the absentee proprietor or mortgagee, represented by paid agencies, is still more deplorable. It is evident that unless some mode of suppressing slavery and the slave trade more effectual than that hitherto pursued be adopted, and without immediate aid, in the shape of money loans, sugar cultivation, upon which 300,000 of the emancipated negroes are wholly dependent, must cease in Jamaica.

But our object in submitting these facts to your Lordship is to enable you to draw your own inferences, and suggest your own remedies, and we beg you will consider our desperate position as an excuse for troubling you with the statement.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

H. A. WHITELOCK,

(and 15 others.)

# *Number and Value of Estates, Live Stock, &c.*

Number of Estates owned by Sub-scriber.	Number of Live Stock.		Value of Live Stock upon all the Estates for which each is interested.		Value of Implements upon Ditto		Total Amount of Expenditure in 1847 for Wages, Taxes, Salaries, Lumber, &c.		Purchase Money of Freeholds.		Annual Amount of Rental Paid by each Lessee.		Estimated Crop for this Year.		Average Daily Number of Labourers employed on all Subscribers' Estates.	Signature of Proprietor and Lessee.
	Cattle.	Mules.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	Hds. Sugr.	Puns. Rum.	£.	s. d.		
Two	660	138	5,340	0 0	2,000	0 0	8,734	7 6	8,000	0 0	550	0 0	430	215	500	H. A. Whitelock.
One	100	.	1,000	0 0	500	0 0	2,500	0 0	5,000	0 0	.	.	120	60	123	T. Tate. (65 Co- lies also employ- ed daily.)
One	51	48	888	0 0	500	0 0	2,200	0 0	7,000	0 0	.	.	110	55	100	E. H. Clarke.
Two	340	10	2,090	0 0	800	0 0	2,700	0 0	6,600	0 0	.	.	140	80	140	W. Walcott.
One	180	.	1,260	0 0	500	0 0	1,920	0 0	4,734	0 0	.	.	100	50	100	C. A. Abbott.
One	170	.	1,020	0 0	450	0 0	1,450	0 0	3,050	0 0	.	.	50	22	60	P. Eason.
Two	610	7	3,765	0 0	900	0 0	6,250	8 4	13,000	0 0	.	.	300	150	250	B. Kitters.
Three	566	37	3,766	0 0	3,000	0 0	9,149	14 7	1,750	0 0	500	0 0	408	152	410	T. M'Niel.
One	160	40	1,360	0 0	500	0 0	2,226	12 6	1,650	0 0	.	.	101	50	100	R. Dewar.
—	280	38	2,800	0 0	530	0 0	4,323	0 0	.	.	660	0 0	200	110	200	D. Sinclair.
One	185	76	1,335	0 0	1,200	0 0	4,850	0 0	6,000	0 0	450	0 0	218	109	240	G. B. Vidal.
One	80	23	790	0 0	500	0 0	1,500	0 0	9,000	0 0	.	.	100	50	70	S. Holt.
Two	250	35	2,060	0 0	1,500	0 0	3,600	0 0	10,000	0 0	200	0 0	160	75	225	S. S. Hugh.
One	230	47	2,080	0 0	900	0 0	3,930	0 0	10,000	0 0	200	0 0	170	85	190	W. R. Cooke.
—	47	18	516	0 0	200	0 0	900	0 0	.	.	150	0 0	35	14	30	W. Whitmore.
—	169	56	2,024	0 0	650	0 0	4,081	10 6	.	.	400	0 0	154	77	160	W. Hutton.
19	4,078	573	32,094	0 0	14,630	0 0	60,315	13 5	95,784	0 0	3,110	0 0	2,796	1,354	2,898	

Grange Hill Post Office, Westmoreland, Jamaica, December 16, 1847.



An attempt having been made by the planters of British Guiana to reduce the wages of their labourers twenty-five per cent. in December last, a general cessation of work ensued throughout the colony, just at the time when the latter part of the crop was fit to be taken off. The packet which arrived on the 3rd of February brought to every merchant and proprietor letters descriptive of the loss which they were sustaining, and of the danger to which the colonists were exposed by the idleness, violence, and acts of incendiarism of the Creole negroes.

Mr. Wilson, however, much to the surprise of every one acquainted with the actual condition of the colony by the latest accounts, declared to the House of Commons that he had received by the very same packet intelligence “ that the negroes had “ met this reduction of wages without any strike, “ or sulkiness, or manifestation of ill-feeling; that “ this had taken the colonists by surprise; and that “ though in wages the free labourers had been reduced twenty per cent. yet in character they had been “ raised in the opinion of the planters fifty per cent.

“ Such,” said the Hon. Member, “ was the “ account received by the last packet with regard “ to the colony *which had been represented* to be in “ the very worst possible condition.”\*

Earl Grey, in the House of Lords, on his part, in alluding to the alleged strike, averred, that “ he had seen a local newspaper which stated that “ a reduction of twenty-five per cent. had since

\* Times, Feb. 5th, 1848.

“ taken place, and had been met most cheerfully,  
 “ and with good humour, by the negroes, who  
 “ knew that the planters could not help it. Thus  
 “ had been obtained, all at once, without any  
 “ expensive immigration scheme, the great advance  
 “ of one-fourth to the supply of the labour of  
 “ the colony. (hear, hear.)

“ Could there be a more direct proof of the  
 “ truth of the argument he had brought forward ?  
 “ *This being the case*, then, would any man tell him  
 “ that the system of protection had been of advance  
 “ to the planters? He held, on the contrary,  
 “ that even if protection were admissible on the  
 “ ground of the general interests of the country,  
 “ *the interests of the planter himself* demanded that  
 “ Parliament should adhere to the determination  
 “ it came to in 1846—to put an end to it.”\*

But unfortunately, *this was not the case*; and had Lord Grey not chosen to place more confidence in the editor of a local newspaper than in Governor Light's despatches, he would not have been betrayed into such a cruel misstatement.

The despatch which arrived by the same packet as the local newspaper quoted from (dated 31st December, 1847, and received Feb. 3, 1848), contained the following passage:—

“ *As affairs now stand, one half the sugar estates will be unable to carry on the cultivation*, unless the price of labour is reduced, and the labourers will learn the truth of my doctrines.”

Governor Light had previously (on the 3rd June 1847), written thus to Lord Grey.

\* Times, Feb. 8th, 1848.

“ I have had the honour to express my sentiments on thorough drainage in this country, and I would gladly see the introduction of the improved mode of agriculture which would be the result of the drainage sought.

“ *Without help from some quarter, these improvements cannot be made,* which I have often said would convert this into one of the greatest sugar producing colonies in the world.”

These documents had not at that time been brought to light by the exertions of Lord George Bentinck ; and the Houses of Parliament—unwilling to give ear to the interested assertions of the West Indian interest,—had no alternative but to place credence in those of Mr. Wilson and Lord Grey.

When the English papers, containing the sugar debates of February, reached Guiana about the middle of March : the strike which Lord Grey had assured the House of Lords, had ceased at the end of the previous year, still existed, and the colonists, amidst rotting canes, choked drainage and rank weeds, read with astonishment and dismay the astounding assertions of the Noble Secretary for the Colonies.

The following observations were made in consequence in the Colonial House of Assembly by the Hon. Peter Rose, one of the ablest of that body, in the course of a speech, pointing out the utter incapacity of the colonists to raise the usual supplies.

“ I do not wish to take up the time of the Court ; but before I resume my seat, I beg to say, and I believe the other members of the elective section will bear me out, that we have no desire to do any thing that would embarrass your Excellency. We are compelled by dire necessity to adopt a line of conduct which we should be

glad under other circumstances to forego. It would afford us great satisfaction to be enabled to raise the supplies. *We are convinced that your Excellency has laid before the Government a true statement of the condition of the colony, and that if they had listened or paid any attention to the despatches which you furnished—if they had not been deaf to reason and justice—things would have been otherwise ; but what are the statements which Earl Grey makes in the House of Lords?* He tells them that great reductions have taken place in the wages of the labourers ; and he quotes an article in the *Royal Gazette* in confirmation, perhaps, of what your Excellency wished should take place. He quotes an article from the *Gazette*, which, according to his version, states that a reduction of 25 per cent. has absolutely taken place in the wages of the labourers, and that they are working cheerfully.

“ GOVERNOR.—*I did not make that statement.*

“ MR. ROSE.—No. I say that your Excellency’s statements, so far as his Lordship has given them, are perfectly correct and satisfactory ; but by way of supporting his views, he read an article which he said he found in a local paper containing a statement that the labourers were working cheerfully at a reduced rate of wages by 25 per cent., which, in his opinion, was at least equal to so many additional labourers, I wish his Lordship better information in future.”

All the subsequent letters, newspapers and despatches from Guiana have corroborated the accuracy of the state of affairs described by the Governor on the 31st December, 1847.

The following packet brought these extracts of a Despatch from Governor Light to Earl Grey, dated Demerara, Jan. 18, 1848, (marked private).

“ The end of the year closed the manufacture of sugar and employment of creoles who held out against any diminution of wages ; and to this moment whatever is done, and very little is doing, is performed by the Portuguese and Coolies, who are, however, often driven from the field by the creoles. It is in vain that the ministers of religion tell the creoles that the planters are

reduced to such a state by the low prices as not to be able to afford, without absolute ruin to themselves, the same rate of wages as before ; they stubbornly refuse to work at any reduction of price.                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*

“ Within one fortnight three fires, incendiary, have occurred ; a return of which I annex.

\*                   \*                   \*                   \*                   \*

“ Under these circumstances, and if unhappily the creoles continue determined in abstaining from work and in revengeful mood, it be found that incendiarism proceeds, I respectfully submit that some stringent law should be passed, as is I believe enforced in England, to make the district or parish contribute to the payment of the value of property destroyed by incendiarism : it will be a wholesome check on those who while they hold back from actual crime do not discourage it, or give information so as to secure double vigilance on the part of the police as well as the well-disposed.

“ Although some three or four creoles have been imprisoned for threatening and ill-treating emigrants who have chosen to accept of lower wages, yet the intimidation still continues. I have directed the inspector-general of police to use every diligence in arresting the progress of intimidation, and to employ the swiftest mode of conveyance of strong bodies of police, whenever he is called on to support the peaceable and well-inclined against their more turbulent comrades.

“ As I stated, the planters wish either to have a fourth more task for the same wages, or to pay a fourth less wages for the working task of last year ; the labourers, by being more industrious, may still obtain the same wages.

“ I have thought it my duty to make your Lordship acquainted with what is passing ; I most earnestly hope that I may shortly be able to write more favourably of the state of the colony.”

A fortnight afterwards Mr. Light writes thus :---

“ I regret to say, that on the 19th instant the logies of plantation Melleville, Mahaica River, east coast of Demerara, were burnt down ; that about the same time an attempt was made to set fire to the dwelling-house of Blairmont, a plantation on the west bank of river Berbice ; and that a few nights later, a dwelling-house belonging to a respectable inhabitant was fired at

the four corners and in the interior, and burnt to the ground, at New Amsterdam; the family escaping with the greatest difficulty, with the loss of all they possessed.

“Every exertion is made by the police to discover the offenders; and rewards are offered for their apprehension or discovery.

“I have, &c. HENRY LIGHT.

“P. S.—February 4th. I regret further to report, that on the 31st ultimo the megass logies of plantation Zorg, Arabian coast, Essequibo, were fired and burnt down at 10 A.M.; making the sixth fire in the month of January.—H. L.”

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 4.

RETURN OF PLANTATIONS

*On which FIRES have occurred since the 31st December, 1847.*

Name of Plantation.	District.	County.	Date of Fire.	Property Destroyed.	Opinion of Stipendiary Magistrate of the District.
Palmyra	(F.)	Essequibo	1 Jan.	Two megass logies.	The act of an incendiary, almost certain; the police on the traces of a fugitive negro.
Montrose	(B.)	Demerara	15 —	An entire range of megass logies.	<i>Idem.</i> —In the middle of the day, in three different places at once.
Lusignan	(B.)	Demerara	16 —	Overseer's dwelling house.	<i>Idem.</i> —At night found on fire at different parts, to the great danger of the lives of the inmates, who lost every thing; and one most seriously hurt in escaping in his shirt.

A most rigid inquiry is now in progress.

H. L.

On the 14h February, 1848, Governor Light writes: “Although the country is tranquil, the cessation from labour continues.\* There were six incendiary fires in January, the last on the 31st, happily none have been reported this month.”

\* The Report of Lord George Bentinck's Committee, published on the 26th of May, declares that up to the latest accounts, the Creole negroes of Guiana were still inactive.

## B E E T - R O O T   S U G A R .

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“ IN considering the question of the comparative value of slave and free labour, it is well worth our while to advert to what is passing in a neighbouring country. In the French West Indian colonies they have still slave labour as in former years ; but, instead of being able to compete with the beet-root sugar grown by free labour in France, they require protection for their sugar grown in a climate better fitted than any other for producing sugar, and on estates cultivated by slave labour. In 1843 a law was passed in France, imposing a duty on beet-root sugar rising at the rate of 5*l.* per kilogramme” (£200. per ton !) “ in each year, until in August, 1848, the duty will be equal to that on colonial sugar. I find, on turning to Mr. M‘Culloch’s *Commercial Dictionary* of 1844, that the effect which was anticipated from this arrangement was that the beet-root manufacture must ultimately be destroyed ; that it would be annihilated in France as effectually as if the plantations had been rooted up. So far, however, from the growth of beet-root being destroyed, the production of beet-root sugar has increased in a most remarkable manner. The cheap slave grown sugar of the French colonies cannot compete with the free grown sugar of France.” — (Speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the 3rd of February ; republished as a pamphlet.)

“ A change had taken place with respect to the cultivation of sugar, of which few persons were probably aware. The quantity of sugar at present produced on the Continent, amounted to more than two-thirds of the whole amount produced in our West

Indian islands not longer than twenty years ago. The total produce on the Continent at the present time was 100,000 tons, and that production took place, *not only in competition with slave labour*, but under other disadvantageous circumstances.” \* \* \* “This was a competition to which the West Indian interests were exposed, and which it was impossible for Parliament to control. The competition, too, was one which promised to be permanent, and was rapidly increasing.”—(Speech of Mr. J. Wilson, M.P., on February the 4th, 1848.)—*The Times*.

Such were what the French term the “*Statistiques hasardées*” of beet-root sugar supplied for the guidance of the House of Commons and the confusion of the West Indian interest by the Chancellor of Exchequer and his new colleague Mr. Wilson. As the subject had for obvious reasons been very little attended to in England, their unscrupulous adaptation of fact to argument stood them in good stead for the moment.

The truth is as follows:—

Beet-root sugar grown in France, paid in the year 1843 a duty of about £12. per ton. The conclusion to be deduced, therefore, from the figures given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he corrected and republished his Speech as the Ministerial case with regard to the sugar question, appears to be that all French sugar, colonial and indigenous, will, on the first of August next, pay an equal duty of 25,300 francs, or £1012. per ton!!!

Well was it observed by a public writer the other day, that it was impossible for the most licentious



journalist to overstate the ignorance of the present Ministers on all matters connected with commerce and finance.

It is therefore only necessary to deal with the ingenious inventions of Mr. Wilson on this subject.

If his statements and arguments mean anything, they mean that Europe has been supplied, and is likely to be supplied in future with beet-root sugar at a cheaper rate than tropical countries using slave labour, can contrive to produce it from the cane ; and that Europe now produces annually a quantity equal to two-thirds of the whole amount grown in the British West Indian colonies twenty years ago.

The latter assertion is unimportant, except as another instance of the excessive latitude which Mr. Wilson permits to himself in adapting fact to argument. In his own paper of February 12, but eight days after the delivery of the speech from which the passage at the head of this letter was extracted, the *Economist*, in order to support another theory, averred that the production of sugar in the British West Indian colonies in 1828, had been 198,400 tons, conveniently forgetting that in the House of Commons, on the 4th of February, he had declared it to have been under 150,000 tons. A statesman who indulges in such a broad margin to his facts is indeed a formidable antagonist, and, until he is found out, a useful ally.

In 1828 about 4500 tons of beet-root sugar were grown in France.

In 1838 the quantity produced in France had increased to 80,000 tons.

Up to that date no duty whatever had been levied on French beet-root sugar, whilst that produced by the *limited and mitigated* slavery of the French colonies, paid 18s. per cwt. on raw sugars, and 23s. per cwt. on refined sugars, and that of *slave importing and slave killing* countries, like Cuba and Brazil, and all other sugars whatever, a duty of 32s. per cwt. with an increase of 8s. per cwt. if imported in any but French bottoms.

In 1838, a duty of about 8s. per cwt. was first imposed on French beet-root sugar.

In 1840, the production, *according to official returns*, had fallen down to 25,698 tons.

In 1843, the production having continued nearly stationary, the duty was again altered, an annual increase of about 2s. per cwt. being imposed upon beet-root sugar until August 1848, when the duties on French colonial and home-grown sugars will be on a par—about 20s. per cwt.; the high excluding duties on all foreign sugars, European and tropical, remaining undiminished.

The beet-root sugar crop of 1847, of France, amounted, according to official returns, to 51,000 tons, the inability of Guadaloupe, Martinique, and Bourbon, to meet the increasing demand of her increasing population, the large sums spent amongst her labouring classes in railways, and *the very heavy protection given against all other sugars*, and more especially against those of slave importing and

slave killing countries, having afforded a stimulus to the home manufacture, which had previously declined, according to official returns, from 80,000 tons in 1838, to 25,698 tons in 1840.

This decrease and subsequent increase, however, has not been nearly so great as it appears to have been from the official returns. So long as beet-root sugar was grown duty free, the quantity produced was readily avowed—but as soon as a duty was imposed, enormous frauds were, until very recently, perpetrated on the excise, by the beet-root manufacturers, which have been during the last two years obviated by new and stringent regulations. In 1843, the Agricultural Society of Valenciennes, fully proved that out of 35,000 tons of beet-root sugar manufactured in France, only 23,000 tons had paid duty.

In the Zollverein, in Belgium, and in Austria, beet-root sugar has also, as in France, owed its existence entirely to the protection which it has received against cane sugar.

Again, Mr. Wilson stated, as a proof of the progress which beet-root was making against cane, that seventy-two new manufactories had been established during the last twelve months in the Zollverein. He omitted, however, to enumerate how many had, during the same period, been abandoned in that commercial confederacy: the truth being, that whilst the cultivation of beet-root was progressing, *under protection*, in Prussia, Brunswick, and Saxe-Gotha, it had been almost entirely abandoned, in spite of protection, in Bavaria, Saxony,

Wirtemberg, Baden, Hesse, Frankfort, Lunenburg, and Westphalia. In Belgium also it has fallen off in the last ten years from 15,000 tons (Dietrici) to 4000 tons, (Matthysens Antwerp, 1848.)

Therefore, notwithstanding the seventy-two new refineries established according to Mr. Wilson so recently in Prussia, it appears, that the states of the Zollverein and Belgium, which in 1838 produced 21,500 tons—in 1847 produced but 18,000 tons; his statement on the subject being as deceptive, as if, in support of a theory that the sartorial art was on the increase in London, he were to point out that three new tailors' shops had been opened in Bond Street, carefully suppressing the fact, that four much larger establishments had simultaneously been closed in Clifford Street.

We will now examine whether beet-root sugar has, as the Economist avers, increased at all in Europe, not “under the most disadvantageous,” but under the most advantageous circumstances, during the last ten years.

According to Professor Dietrici, in 1838,

The states of the Zollverein produced about	6,500 tons.
Russia . . . . .	7,500
Belgium . . . . .	15,000
Austria . . . . .	2,300
	<hr/>
	31,300
France, (according to McCulloch)	80,000
	<hr/>
	111,300
The Economist avers that the produc-	
tion of all Europe, in 1847, amounted to	100,000
	<hr/>
Decrease	11,300
	<hr/>

Shewing by his own figures in 1847, a decrease of 11,300 tons as compared with 1838. The best French authorities, however, state the production of Europe to have been in 1847 but 85,000 tons, and estimate the probable produce of all Europe, for 1848, but at 90,000 tons.

Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the actual decrease from 1838 to 1847, of beet-root sugar, grown annually in Europe, is much nearer 25,000 tons than 11,300 tons.

The public may now judge of the value of Mr. Wilson's assertion "that beet-root sugar had increased not only in competition with slave grown sugar, but under other discouraging circumstances:" the actual facts being, that in no country in Europe where it is manufactured, has it yet been exposed to open competition with any description of slave labour produce at all; that instead of increasing, it has during the last ten years decreased considerably, and that McCulloch was perfectly right in asserting that if it were thrown unprotected into the open markets of Europe, to compete with the sugar of Cuba and Brazil, it would be annihilated as effectually as if the beet plantations had been rooted up.

# SIR C. WOOD AND LORD GLENELG

ON

## COMPENSATION.

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SIR C. Wood, in opening his speech on February 3, 1848, after announcing that he meant to state the case with “the greatest fairness,” affirmed that the West Indians had themselves valued their entire property, land, machinery, stock and slaves at £15,000,000; that the House of Commons had paid them £20,000,000; and that “after this country had paid over and above what the estimate of the interested parties had indicated as just and reasonable, it could not be asserted with any show of reason, that the West Indian body had any claim to further or more ample concession.”\*

Whether any West Indian or West Indians did ever at any time estimate the fee simple of the property invested in all our sugar colonies at £15,000,000, I am unable to say—moreover, before such an estimate obtains any credence, it is necessary to know by whom and on what data it was made—but this I do know, and Sir C. Wood knows it too, that the value of the slaves alone in the British

\* Times, Feb. 4.

sugar colonies, calculated not by the West Indian interest, but by the Commissioners of the Crown at the average of the prices which they had fetched at forced auction sales during the preceding seven years, amounted to £43,000,000, and that £20,000,000 was adjudged to the planters in compensation for their emancipation, together with an apprenticeship of seven years.

When Sir C. Wood further adverted to the acts of the Whig Government, by which the planters were subsequently deprived of that portion of the compensation awarded to them, which was comprised in four years' apprenticeship, he observed that "in several instances he believed the change had worked beneficially, and it was admitted generally by the West Indians that the old system of apprenticeship had not worked serviceably ("no, no"). At any rate, in many cases, the curtailment of the period of apprenticeship had given every satisfaction."\*

In two small islands, Barbados and Antigua, the labouring population was indeed so dense as to render apprenticeship unnecessary; but in every other of the West Indian sugar colonies its premature abolition proved a source of heavy loss to the planters, as their diminished crops testify, and the following table of the cost of manufacturing a cwt. of sugar, during an average of the last three years of slavery, the period of apprenticeship, and the first three years of freedom clearly shews.

\* Times, Feb. 4.

Colonies.	Average of Estates.	Slavery.		Appren- ticeship.		Freedom.	
		s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
Jamaica . . .	22	10	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	9	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	29	2
Grenada . . .	13	9	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	9	0	24	9
St. Vincent . . .	3	7	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	7	1	21	6
Guiana . . .	9	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8	2	24	11
Tobago . . .	2	8	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	11	2	27	10
Trinidad . . .	2	9	5	8	3	32	6 $\frac{1}{2}$

The above average cost is inclusive of rum and molasses, but exclusive of interest on land and plants.

Many transfers both of estates, whose value, as the table shews, consisted mainly in the services of the apprentices attached to them, and of the services of apprentices alone, took place; and to the vendors and purchasers, Lord Glenelg, the then Whig Secretary for the Colonies, wrote thus, in a circular despatch dated October 12, 1835, when he heard that some doubts had been expressed by those parties, relative to the probability of the fair and just fulfilment by the mother country of the bargain she had forced on the unwilling colonists:—

*“ The purchaser of a claim under the Slavery  
abolition act does not incur the slightest assignable  
risk of losing his money; he has for his security  
the national faith of Great Britain and Ireland,  
pledged in the most solemn form in which such an  
engagement was ever yet made.—If the seller sup-  
poses that any danger really exists, he labours*



*“ under an illusion so gross, as without further proof  
 “ to demonstrate that he is not in a state of general  
 “ information to deal on equal terms with the  
 “ speculators to whom his right is transferred.”*

Little more than two years afterwards the British Government compelled the unfortunate colonists to surrender more than half the apprenticeship uncompensated for the loss they thereby incurred ; and yet Sir C. Wood declared that the West Indians had been overpaid for their property, that they had been bought out stock and block, and therefore have no right to interfere with what the Free Traders choose to do with their own.—The most charitable supposition to make, by way of accounting for Sir C. Wood’s statements, is, what actually was the case, that he was entirely ignorant of the subject, and merely spoke from a brief prepared for him by the clerks in the Colonial Office, in the absence of any other member of the Government better acquainted with the matter, for Lord John Russell was at that time unwell, Mr. Hawes in abeyance, and Mr. Labouchere too scrupulous to condescend to make the requisite misrepresentations.

“ When orators are not particular as to their facts—when they condescend to suppress good evidence, and to build brilliant arguments on what they must well know to be unworthy foundations—it is easy for them to obtain a temporary triumph.” — *J. Omnium's Letter to the Times, Feb. 7, 1848.*

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THE following analysis of a few “ points” made by J. Wilson, Esq. M. P., (the Editor of the Economist, and author of a paper therein about six months since, headed “ Cheap Sugar, the triumph of Free Trade”) in a speech in the House of Commons, in support of Sir Charles Wood's views, will shew that gentleman's ability and audacity in adapting fact to argument.

“ The Noble Lord alluded on the previous night to Colonel Flinter's account of Porto Rico, and said he did not place much confidence in that gentleman's statement with regard to the labouring population.—He (Mr. Wilson) could say, that having referred to a great number of other sources, he had upon the whole found that gentleman's statements perfectly correct, and his representation respecting the proportion of the slave to the free population in Porto Rico was borne out by all the recent accounts. In the chief part of the island he stated that the cultivation *was nearly all carried on by free labourers.*” — (*Speech of J. Wilson, Esq. M. P.—Times, Feb. 5th, 1848.*)

The entire production of sugar in Porto Rico is under 50,000 tons. The population of the island is 500,000 souls, of whom 50,000 are negro slaves.

--In Cuba, Mr. Tolmé, our late Consul, reports that each slave on an Ingenio is computed to raise and manufacture on an average three tons of sugar; his statement is corroborated by that of Mr. Overmann, a planter of Porto Rico, in a paper published in the 7th Report of Lord George Bentinck's Committee—supplied by Mr. Wilson himself.

If therefore only one-third of the slaves in Porto Rico are employed on the sugar estates, it will be seen that there is no necessity of calling in free labour to account for any portion of the crop.

Let us however look to the indisputable evidence now recorded on this point. John Lindegren, our Consul at Porto Rico, writes 24th February, 1848, in answer to certain queries sent to him from the Colonial office :

“There is a great deal of uncultivated land in the island, but nearly if not quite as much is now under cultivation as can be effected with the present number of slaves. The annual produce of sugar may be considered at about 100,000 hogsheads of 1000 lbs. each, for home consumption and exportation, and it cannot be much increased, *unless they can get the free people to work more readily than they do at present*, for the number of slaves in the island is about 50,000, and if from them are deducted those employed on cotton, coffee, looking after cattle, in the towns, &c. and the old and useless persons, as well as children, *there will not remain more than from 25,000 to 30,000 able slaves for the cultivation and manufacture of sugar.*” \* \* \*

“Perhaps it may be fairly estimated that from a fourth to a fifth part of the cultivation and manufacture of sugar is done by free people.”

Mr. Wilson “could not resist the evidence” pre-

sented by the contrasted condition of the British West Indian colonies, and Cuba and Porto Rico.

“In Porto Rico 47 new brick or stone bridges, 130 wooden bridges, and 134 miles of good roads had been made within the last six years. Could any such improvements be found in the British West Indian islands? Upon the authority of Sir R. Schomburg it appeared that *no less than 800 miles of railroad had been constructed in Cuba*, while in the whole of the British West Indian islands there were only twelve or fifteen miles of railroad formed. \* \* \*

“In Cuba and Porto Rico, at least 400 per cent. of the whole population were white—70 per cent. were freemen, and only 30 per cent. were slaves in the two islands.”—(*Speech of J. Wilson, Esq. M.P. Feb. 4, 1848.—Times.*)

In Porto Rico, until very lately, there were no roads at all; consequently it has been more necessary to make them in that island than in Jamaica, Antigua, Demerara, and Barbados, where very good ones have long existed; in Cuba, an island 2,500 miles in circumference, there are none, excepting the railways running into the sugar districts, and as those colonies have been prospering on the downfall of the British sugar planters, the means of future improvement have been taken from the former and given to the latter.

Mr. Wilson's friend, Mr. Overmann, declares, (7th Report, p. 373), that in Porto Rico, so far from being ahead of our colonies in manufacture, they make their sugar “in the most common way, by cattle mills, and he does not think there are more than about twenty steam mills in the island.

"They have likewise few wind, and still less water-mills."

Mr. Crawford, Consul-general in Cuba, in answer to queries sent out by Earl Grey, states, 21st February, 1848, that "*latterly* in Cuba, steam mills have been substituted for cattle mills," (they have been in use in the British colonies upwards of twenty-five years), "in addition to which, *the use of the Jamaica trains of boilers*, has materially increased the quantity of sugar obtained from the juice, whilst improvements in the furnaces have diminished the consumption of fuel; so that that process of sugar making, is likely to continue in preference to the system of Derosne and Cail, which, although found to be most perfect, the apparatus is more costly, is far from being the most profitable, and the sugar so made, whether because of the contact of animal charcoal with the vegetable substance of the cane juice, or from whatever other cause, more easily loses its sweetness and other properties for the after process of refining."\*

They have, however, labour at command. They can weed their fields when they require weeding—they can plant when the weather is favourable—they can cut and grind their canes when they are ripe; and, moreover, as they work during crop time night and day, "making no Sundays," a twelve horse steam engine, and a single set of coppers and vacuum pans, will take off as large a crop in Cuba, Porto Rico, or Brazil,

\* 7th Report, C. S. P. p. 368.

as a twenty-four horse engine, and two sets of copper and vacuum pans in Jamaica or Guiana, where the utmost the planters can do will not keep the mill going above twelve hours out of the twenty-four ; competition with them is thus rendered impossible.

In Cuba there are exactly 170 miles of railway, not 800, as Mr. Wilson wished the House to believe.

Mr. Wilson, in order to demonstrate that the riches and prosperity of Cuba were owing to the number of its white inhabitants, massed its population, of which more than one half are negro slaves, with that of Porto Rico, an island comparatively insignificant as a sugar producing colony, where nine-tenths of the population are white and coloured freemen, and then informed the House that *in the two islands*, seventy per cent. were freemen, and but thirty per cent. slaves—that there were four white men to one negro.

It would be scarcely a more unprincipled distortion of truth to strike an average of the white and black population in Barbados and the Isle of Wight ! A million of people, one half slaves, make in Cuba 255,000 tons of sugar ; half a million in Porto Rico, of whom but one-tenth are slaves, make but 45,000 tons, which is moreover, made almost entirely by slave-labour, and Porto Rico is then cited as an example of the advantages of free over slave-labour.

“ Perhaps the most conclusive evidence of the greater economy of free labour over slave labour, was to be found in the progress of sugar cultivation in the East.

“Twenty years ago Java, now one of the most considerable markets for the sugar supply of Europe, barely produced as much of that article as its own inhabitants consumed; the whole exported produce in 1826, did not exceed 1000 tons. Since then, in open competition with Cuba and Brazil, and with the slave labour of their own Surinam, the production of Java had increased to 75,000 tons last year. He (Mr. Wilson) did not mean to say the labourers in Java were freemen, but, as far as he could learn from Dutch Ministers who had resided officially there, they were as free as any labouring people in the world.”—*Speech of J. Wilson, Esq. M.P., 4th Feb. 1848.*

In 1847, Capt. Francis Blackwood returned from a surveying expedition in the Indian seas, in H. M. S. Fly. A gentleman who accompanied him as naturalist, Mr. Jukes, has written an account of the expedition, and having on two occasions during the five years it lasted spent some time in Java, he turned his attention especially to the sugar cultivation, of which ample and most interesting details will be found in the second volume of his work. The Dutch authorities gave him every facility for conducting his inquiries, in which he was assisted by an English gentleman long resident in the island. The following extracts will shew the mode in which “free labour” in Java has been enabled to compete with slave labour elsewhere.

“The coolies, or work-people are supplied (i.e. compelled to work) by the Government both for cutting canes and for the work in the mill. *From the natural indolence of the Javanese, great difficulty would be experienced in procuring work people without the assistance of Government.*

“Fifteen doits ( $2\frac{1}{2}d$  English) is paid a daily labourer by fabricants who have old contracts, 20 doits ( $3d.$ ) by those of later date. Daily coolies are obliged to work from six in the morning to six in the evening. For night-work they generally receive double wages.”

Mr. Jukes adds in a note, “The meaning of this is, that the people are *compelled to work by their rulers, native and Dutch, and to receive such wages as they may choose to order them.* If not a system of slavery it is one of the most complete serfdom.” — *Jukes' Voyage of H. M. S. Fly*, vol. 2, p. 191.

Mr. Crawford, a gentleman of high character, long resident in Java, who was examined before Lord George Bentinck's Committee, corroborates Mr. Jukes's statements on every point as to the compulsory nature of the labour by which the Java sugar is made.

A paper appeared in the *Economist* of the 12th of February, in which Mr. Wilson attempts to prove that the distress of the British West India colonies is caused, not by competition with slave grown sugar, but by the enormous increase of free labour sugar during the last twenty years in the East, and in Europe “altogether irrespective and independent of the acts of the British Legislature, either as regards slavery or protection against foreign producers.” He gives the following table in support of his theory, and confidently announces that we are in future to look eastward and to Europe for the means of suppressing the Slave Trade by means of free-grown sugar.



1828.		1847.	
SLAVE LABOUR.		FREE LABOUR.	
	Tons.		Tons.
British West Indies .	198,400	British West Indies .	145,000
Mauritius . . .	18,000	Mauritius . . .	65,000
Cuba and Porto Rico	65,000	East Indies . . .	70,000
Brazil . . . .	28,000	Java . . . .	75,000
	<hr/>	Manilla, Siam, China	30,000
Total, Slave sugar	309,000	Europe, Beet-root .	100,000
			<hr/>
		Total. Free labour	485,000
		SLAVE LABOUR.	
		Cuba and Porto Rico	305,000
		Brazil . . . .	112,000
			<hr/>
			902,000

Mr. Wilson did not appear to have been aware at the time he wrote this passage, that the sugar cultivation of British India and the Mauritius, so long as it did not share the protection conceded to the British West Indies, was entirely unable to compete in the open markets of Europe with Cuba and Brazil—that when that protection was conceded to it, the Mauritius nearly quadrupled her produce—and the export of sugar from India increased ten-fold, stimulated as it was by the crippled state of the British West Indies; these circumstances, about which there can be no doubt, were surely not “independent and irrespective of the acts of the British Legislature, either as regards slavery or protection,” any more than the subsequent fact, that the cultivation which had thus been forced by the English Government in our Eastern possessions is now utterly destroyed by the admission into this country of slave grown produce from slave importing countries. If we deduct from the 340,000 tons of foreign and Eastern free grown sugar by which the

West Indian colonies have, according to Mr. Wilson, been demolished—the sugars of Mauritius and British India, those of Java, which are not free grown, and beet-root, grown under high protection—there will only remain 30,000 tons of a very inferior sugar from Manilla, Siam, and China, sent to England, not in consequence of increased cultivation in those sugar consuming countries, but in the hope that the high prices which ruled about eighteen months ago would have continued. The speculators who imported them are not likely to try the experiment again.

In 1828 the British West Indian slave colonies, not however importing slaves, produced 198,400 tons of sugar. Cuba and Brazil importing annually, according to the accurate and well informed Mr. Bandinel (First Report of Mr. Hutt's Committee on the Slave Trade, p. 220), 94,000 negroes—but 93,000 tons. As Great Britain at that time was not permitted, in consequence of the high duty levied upon sugar, to consume the entire production of her own colonies,\* the price of sugar in England was more or less regulated by the continental markets, and notwithstanding the advantage enjoyed by the Spaniards and Brazilians in an unlimited supply of slaves, the superior intelligence, capital and industry of the British planter enabled him to compete successfully with his rivals.†

\* An average of 37,000 tons of British plantation produce was annually exported to the markets of Europe prior to 1833.

† The drawback on the exportation of sugar used to afford a slight advantage to the British planter, which, however, did not nearly compensate for the advantages derived by the Spaniards

In 1848, it appears that whilst the produce of the British West Indian colonies have diminished one-fourth, as compared with 1828, Cuba and Porto Rico have increased their production nearly six-fold, and Brazil four-fold. Yet in no other branch of commerce have those nations been able to hold their own with British enterprise. Is not this startling increase on the one hand, and falling off on the other, to be rather attributed to the acts of the British Legislature, both as regards slavery, protection, and pseudo-humanity, than to the sudden imbecility of the West Indian planters since 1828.

*Cæteris paribus*—if they had been dealt with fairly and rationally, there can be no reason why, if up to 1828 the British sugar growers had been able to compete with the Cubans and Brazilians, they should not have continued to do so—and if they had increased their production in the same ratio that the Spaniards and Brazilians have increased theirs; if the acts of our Legislature had been just to the Englishman, instead of favouring the foreigner, the British West Indian colonies, producing in 1828 194,400 tons of sugar, would in 1848 have grown sufficient for the supply of the whole world, at as low a cost as it is at present grown at in any part of the globe.

and Portuguese in the constant influx of labour from Africa, which the English were denied after 1807, and for the disadvantages to which the latter was subjected by the various modifications of slavery, and the agitation which preceded the Act of Emancipation in 1833.

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Perhaps the most convincing answer to the assertion that British Colonial property is only depreciated in common with all other property by the circumstances of the times, is contained in the following extracts from the "*Trade Circulars*" of Messrs. Drake, Brothers, and Co., the leading merchants of the Havana, themselves extensive proprietors of sugar estates in that island:—

In 1844, they stated that,

"They had no expectation of the price of sugar being improved except by having the English market opened to the produce of the island, where, if this could be effected at a rate even of 50 per cent. above the duty on English colonial sugar, still they should obtain for their produce double the amount they can obtain at present."

On the 8th of Jan. 1848, they say,

"The production of 1847 has far exceeded that of any previous year, and the prices obtained by planters *have been so highly remunerative, that they are enabled to adopt every means for the further extension of their crops.*"

Another *price current*, subsequent in date, adds,

"During the past year, the prices of sugar in our markets were supported at high rates, with but slight and temporary fluctuations, notwithstanding the large crop. This was mainly owing to the unprecedentedly heavy shipments to the United States and to Great Britain, aided by a well-sustained enquiry from Spain, with a fair demand from other parts."

THE END.



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